

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 -- 13. (canceled)

1 14. (currently amended) An apparatus for aligning a
2 stack of flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge ~~, some~~
3 ~~of the sheets~~ and having a portion projecting laterally past one of
4 the edges, the apparatus comprising:

5 an aligning ~~stabilizing~~ element shiftable horizontally
6 toward and away from the one edge of the substrate and having a
7 face directed toward the sheets stack;

8 a slip-preventing layer on the face; and

9 means for shifting the aligning element horizontally
10 toward the stack and substrate for engaging the projecting ~~sheets~~
11 portion of the stack and pushing same inward on the substrate to a
12 position lying on or inward of the outer edge without downwardly
13 bending or deflecting the sheets.

1 15. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 14 wherein the layer is resilient.

1 16. (currently amended) The apparatus defined in claim
2 ~~[[14]]~~ 15 wherein the layer is made of an elastomer.

1 17. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 14 wherein the element has an upper part and a lower part.

1 18. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 17 wherein the upper and lower part are joined together at a
3 nonplanar interface.

1 19. (currently amended) An apparatus for aligning a
2 stack of flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, ~~some~~
3 ~~of the sheets~~ a portion of the stack projecting laterally past one
4 of the edges, the apparatus comprising:

5 an aligning stabilizing element shiftable horizontally
6 toward and away from the one edge of the substrate;

7 a member on the aligning element engageable under the
8 stack; and

9 means for shifting the aligning element horizontally
10 toward the stack and fitting the member under the projecting ~~sheets~~
11 portion to support same while and pushing the projecting sheets
12 inward on the substrate to a position lying on or inward of the
13 outer edge without downwardly bending or deflecting the sheets.

1 20. (previously presented) The apparatus defined in
2 claim 19 wherein the element has a horizontal surface portion
3 generally level with an upper surface of the substrate.

4 21. (currently amended) A method of aligning a stack of
5 flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, ~~some of the~~
6 ~~sheets~~ a portion of the stack projecting laterally past one of the
7 edges, the method comprising the step of:

8 pressing a nonslip surface of an aligning stabilizing
9 element against the laterally projecting ~~sheets~~ portion so as to
10 push the laterally projecting ~~sheets~~ portion in at least to the
11 outer edge without downward bending the sheets while pushing the
12 ~~[[m]] portion in ; and thereafter pressing the stabilizing element~~
13 ~~against the other sheets in the stack to align them on the~~
14 ~~substrate.~~

1 22. (currently amended) The method defined in claim 21,
2 further comprising the step before pressing the stabilizing element
3 against the laterally projecting ~~sheets~~ portion of:

4 aligning the substrate relative to the stabilizing
5 element.

1 23. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 21, further comprising the step of

3 reducing friction between a lowermost sheet of the stack
4 and a support surface of the substrate on which it rests.

1 24. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 23 wherein friction is reduced by providing a low-friction foil
3 between the lowermost sheet and the upper surface.

1 25. (previously presented) The method defined in claim
2 23 wherein friction is reduced by coating the upper surface with a
3 lubricant.

1 26. (currently amended) A method of aligning a stack of
2 flexible sheets on a substrate having an outer edge, ~~some of the~~
3 ~~sheets~~ a portion of the stack projecting laterally past one of the
4 edges, the method comprising the step of:

5 engaging a support ~~surface~~ member of an aligning
6 ~~stabilizing~~ element underneath the laterally projecting ~~sheets~~
7 portion and pushing the ~~stabilizing~~ aligning element and the
8 laterally projecting ~~sheets~~ portion in at least to the outer edge
9 without downwardly bending the laterally projecting sheets ~~;~~ ~~and~~
10 ~~thereafter pressing the stabilizing element against the other~~
11 ~~sheets in the stack to align them on the substrate.~~